REMARKS

The non-final Official Action dated February 26, 2002 has been received and its contents carefully noted. This response is filed May 28, 2002, within the three month shortened statutory period and thus is believed to be timely filed.

Claims 1-32 are pending in the present application, and Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claims 29-32. Claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 14, 16, 18, 21, 25 and 29 are independent and claim 8 has been amended to correct minor matters of form. Accordingly, claims 1-32 are now pending in the present application and, for the reasons set forth in detail below, are believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

The abstract has been amended to reflect the features of the present claimed inventions and also provided on a separate sheet for the Examiner's convenience.

Claim 8 has been amended to correct a minor grammatical error. The amendment is merely clarifying in nature, and should not in any way affect the scope of protection afforded the claims for infringement purposes, particularly, under the Doctrine of Equivalents.

Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Official Action reject claims 1-28 as obvious based on the combination of the alleged admitted prior art and U.S. Patent No. 5,376,926 to Sano. Paragraphs 4 and 5 further reject claims 1-28 as obvious based on the combination of U.S. Patent No. 5,335,023 to Edwards and Sano. The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection because the Official Action has not made a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

As stated in MPEP §§ 2143-2143.01, to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. Obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the

teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either explicitly or implicitly in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. "The test for an implicit showing is what the combined teachings, knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art, and the nature of the problem to be solved as a whole would have suggested to those of ordinary skill in the art." *In re Kotzab,* 217 F.3d 1365, 1370, 55 USPQ2d 1313, 1317 (Fed. Cir. 2000). See also *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988); *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992).

The present invention is generally directed to an active matrix device having a plurality of switching elements for switching pixels and a driver circuit for driving the switching elements wherein the driver circuit includes a plurality of buffer circuits. Particularly, a portion of at least one of the buffer circuits is positioned in the same line as a portion of at least another one of the buffer circuits. For example, referring to Fig. 4, a circuit (p+1, q+1) of one buffer circuit connected to one signal line is positioned on a same line as a circuit (p+1, q) of another buffer circuit connected to another signal line. This configuration is very advantageous for reducing a variation of electrical characteristics among buffer circuits; such a variation tends to be caused by a non-uniformity of crystallinity of a semiconductor film as set forth in the specification.

The alleged admitted prior art, Edwards and Sano, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest that a circuit of one buffer circuit connected to one signal line is positioned on a same line as a circuit of another buffer circuit connected to another signal line. The Official Action concedes that both the alleged admitted prior art and Edwards do not teach or suggest buffer circuitry means comprising parallel TFTs and relies on Sano to teach parallel TFTs (pp 2-3, Paper No. 3). However, nothing in the alleged admitted prior art, Edwards or Sano is directed to positioning one buffer circuit connected to one signal line to another buffer circuit connected to another signal line as shown, for example, in Fig. 4 of the specification.

Thus, it is respectfully asserted that the prior art of record fails to disclose or suggest each and every limitation of the pending claims as required to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Furthermore, there appears to be no disclosure or suggestion to modify the references (or combination or references) to achieve the present invention. Specifically, there is no disclosure or suggestion of the analog buffer circuits including at least two circuits in parallel and having at least one thin film transistor, wherein one of the at least two circuits is positioned in the same column line as one of the circuits of another of the analog buffer circuits. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric J. Robinson
Reg. No. 38,285

Robinson Intellectual Property Law Office, P.C.
PMB 955
21010 Southbank Street
Potomac Falls, Virginia 20165
(571) 434-6789

MARKED-UP VERSION OF THE AMENDED CLAIMS

8. (Amended) An active matrix device according to claim 6 wherein [an] electrical characteristics of said first and second circuits in one of said buffer circuits differ from each other.